

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim 1 is allowed. However, claim 1 has been currently amended to better clarify the wording of the invention within said claim. Passage to issue of claim 1 is earnestly solicited.

Claims 2 – 13 are hereby canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application in order to cover the subject matter of the canceled claims and claim the full scope of the subject matter for which Applicants are entitled to patent protection.

Claims 14 – 16 are added.

Accordingly, claims 1 and 14-16 are presented for further prosecution. Favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the remarks that follow.

Claims 2-6 and 11-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in light of U.S. Patent No. 6102,198. Claims 2 – 5, 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in light of U.S. Patent No. 5,698,217. Claims 7 –10 are objected to as depending on rejected claim 2 but are considered allowable if the base claim is rewritten to include all the limitations of such claims. Applicants thank Examiner Arnold for indicating that patentable subject matter is present in claims 2 and 7-10.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 2-6 and 11-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in light of U.S. Patent No. 6102,198. Claims 2 – 5, 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in light of U.S. Patent No. 5,698,217.

Claims 2 – 13 have been canceled. New claims 14 – 16 have been added. Applicants suggest that new claim 14 is patentably distinguished over the cited art as it includes the limitations of claims 7, 9 and 10 and base claim 2. Since claim 10 depends from claim 9 that further depends from claim 8, Applicants assume that the Examiner's objection is directed to the claim limitations of claims 7, 9 and 10. Applicants courteously request withdrawal of the objection.

Moreover, since the rejection of claim 2 (new claim 14) has been overcome, Applicants submit that claims 15 and 16 that are dependent thereon are also patentably distinguished over the cited art.

Conclusion

Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account 500511. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extension fee to Deposit Account 500511.

Respectfully submitted,

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